

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 012240Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3075

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 5642

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AR

SUBJ: EMBASSY MEMORANDA CONTROVERSY

REF: BUENOS AIRES 5635; BUENOS AIRES 5641

1. SUMMARY: EFFORTS REPORTED UNDERWAY TO HAVE CHARGE DECLARED PNG. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY SUGGESTS DEPT CALL IN ARGENTINE CHARGE. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTERNOON PRESS REPORTS SEVERAL CONGRESSIONAL DEPUTIES HAVE PROPOSED PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION TO THE EXECUTIVE AS TO WHETHER THE TIME HAS NOT ARRIVED FOR DECLARING ME PERSONA NON GRATA AS CONSEQUENCE OF EMBASSY MEMORANDA ON PROPOSED ECONOMIC LEGISLATION. EMBASSY CONTACTS ARE ALSO PICKING UP REPORTS OF POSSIBILITY OF SUCH ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE.

3. APART FROM ANY PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS, IT IS A MATTER OF DEEP CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE OF U.S.-ARGENTINE RELATIONS THAT UP TO THIS TIME GOA HAS TAKEN NO ACTION TO KEEP MATTER IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE. PRESS RELEASE BY FOREIGN OFFICE TODAY, REPEATED BY PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE (BA-5635), CERTAINLY NOT CALCULATED TO KEEP MATTER FROM HAVING FURTHER REPERCUSSIONS. DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE NOTED THAT THE RELEASE DOES NOT INCLUDE STATEMENT TO ME BY FOREIGN MINISTER ON JULY 26 THAT GOA CONSIDERED MATTER TERMINATED WITH HIS ADMONISHMENT, ALTHOUGH SAME STATEMENT WAS MADE BY FOREIGN OFFICE ORALLY WHEN MATTER FIRST BROKE IN PRESS YESTERDAY, THOUGH ONLY PICKED UP BY NACION. MOREOVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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NONE OF THE STORIES IN THE PRESS HAVE INCLUDED KEY POINTS THAT SUBMISSION OF THE CONTROVERSIAL MEMORANDA WAS (A) REQUESTED AND (B) REQUESTED SPECIFICALLY BY THE THEN PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER, RAUL LASTIRI, WHO IS NOW PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT.

(AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, EMBASSY HAS BEEN AT PAINS TO KEEP HIS NAME OUT OF THIS MATTER.) THE FACT THAT THE GOA BY ITS SILENCE ON THESE POINTS IS PERMITTING, IF NOT ENCOURAGING, THIS MATTER TO BE PLAYED OUT IN PUBLIC IN A MANNER THAT COMPLETELY DISTORTS AND MISREPRESENTS A PERFECTLY NORMAL DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE OF REPRESENTATIONS IN BEHALF OF NATIONAL INTERESTS RAISES A SERIOUS QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THIS EPISODE IS BEING USED BY SOME ELEMENTS IN THE GOA FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES UNCONNECTED WITH AND DISPROPORTIONATE TO THE INCIDENT INVOLVED. I AM DEEPLY DISTURBED THAT THE GOA ACTIONS MAY PORTEND AN EFFORT TO EXPLOIT U.S.-ARGENTINE RELATIONS FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL PURPOSES AND EVEN TO INHIBIT FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS BY THE EMBASSY IN THE FUTURE WHEN U.S. INTERESTS ARE ENDANGERED.

4. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES I WISH TO SUGGEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDER DESIRABILITY OF HAVING THE ARGENTINE CHARGE CALLED IN PROMPTLY BY A HIGH-RANKING DEPARTMENTAL OFFICER, PERHAPS DEPUTY SECRETARY, TO DISCUSS U.S. PREOCCUPATION OVER THE GOA'S HANDLING OF THIS MATTER. I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT OFFICER EXPRESS REGRET OVER THIS UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT IN U.S.-ARGENTINE RELATIONS, BUT THAT HE THEN POINT OUT THAT THE USG IS AWARE, AS GOA MUST BE, THAT THE MEMORANDA WERE SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, WHICH HE WOULD PREFER NOT BE NAMED AT THIS POINT (IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT LASTIRI'S NAME NOT REPEAT NOT BE MENTIONED ON THIS OCCASION), THAT THE CHARGE HAS ADEQUATELY EXPLAINED THE INTENTION OF THE MEMORANDA, AND HAS ALREADY APOLOGIZED FOR ANY OFFENSE TO WHICH A HASTY TRANSLATION MAY HAVE GIVEN RISE, THAT IN ANY CASE THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CHARGE WERE FULLY IN ACCORD WITH ACCEPTED DIPLOMATIC PRACTICES AS FOR EXAMPLE GOA REPRESENTATIONS TO USG OVER SUGAR QUOTAS AND MORE RECENTLY STEEL SCRAP EXPORT QUOTAS, AND THAT THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD STATED TO THE CHARGE ON JULY 26 THAT THE MATTER WAS CONSIDERED TERMINATED BY THE GOA. THE STATE OFFICER MIGHT THEN SAY THAT IN THIS SITUATION THE GOVERNMENT OF THE U.S. IS PUZZLED AND PREOCCUPIED BY THE EXAGGERATED AND DISPROPORTIONATE MANNER IN WHICH THIS MINOR INCIDENT IS BEING ALLOWED TO DEVELOP IN ARGENTINA WITH EFFECTS THAT CAN ONLY BE CONFIDENTIAL

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DETRIMENTAL TO THE CORDIAL RELATIONS WHICH THE USG HAS EARNESTLY HOPED TO MAINTAIN WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA.

5. IN WEIGHING THIS SUGGESTION, AN IMPORTANT FACTOR MUST BE ITS PROBABLE RECEPTION HERE IF ACTED UPON. OUR THOUGHT IS THAT AN OFFICIAL EXPRESSION OF CONCERN AT HIGH LEVELS MIGHT GIVE PAUSE TO THOSE WHO SEEM BENT ON EXAGGERATING AND DISTORTING THIS MATTER. GOA STILL HAS OPPORTUNITY TO TREAT INCIDENT AS CLOSED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS STATEMENT ON JULY 26. IF IT NOW CHOOSES TO ALLOW MATTER TO BE PUSHED (OR ITSELF PUSH) TO EXTREMES CURRENTLY RUMORED, IT CAN ONLY SIGNIFY A CALCULATED DECISION TO EXPLOIT IT FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL PURPOSES REGARDLESS OF CONSEQUENCES FOR U.S.-ARGENTINE RELATIONS. I AM NOT

SANGUINE THAT THIS SUGGESTION WILL ALTER COURSE OF EVENTS,  
IF THAT DECISION HAS IN FACT BEEN TAKEN, BUT IT WILL MAKE CLEAR  
THAT USG IS FULLY COGNIZANT OF THE ARTIFICIALITY OF THE ISSUE  
AND DISAPPROVES OF WHAT IS GOING ON.  
KREBS

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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